Faculty Evaluations:
A Roadmap for Chairs

Fall 2015 – Angel Kwolek-Folland, Associate Provost,
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Academic Administrator Series
Agenda

• The Chair and Faculty Evaluations
• Types of Evaluations
• 6 Tips on Evaluation Letters
• The Role of Evaluations in Discipline
Chairs and Evaluations

• Chairs do many things; maybe none more important than faculty evaluation.
  o It’s important that for the time you are chair, you realize that it’s not about you—Chair is a role and people will interact with you in that role.

• Chairs’ annual and cyclical evaluation letters are very important in the P&T process, in SPE, and in disciplinary matters.

• Your colleagues, college committee, deans, the APB, president and SVPs rely on your insights and opinions.

• Keep in mind also that at the college and university level, P&T evaluators will be reading all of your letters and weighing them against one another.
Types of Evaluations

- Mid-term Evaluation
- Annual Evaluations
- Sustained Performance Evaluations
- P&T Evaluation
#1 - Annual Evaluations are Critical

#1: Annual evaluations are key to many other actions.

- Evaluations point faculty to what they need to accomplish; can encourage, reward, or warn.
- If you have a faculty member who is not meeting expectations, address that in the annual evaluations.
  - If you, or your predecessor, has given an under-performing faculty member a satisfactory evaluation for 5 years, it won’t be easy to suddenly argue that they haven’t been doing well all along.
- If you inherit a problem, get with your Associate Dean to develop a strategy to resolve.
- If the annual evaluations accurately capture the chair’s assessment each year, the moments when change comes (tenure and/or promotion, discipline, etc.) will be easier for everyone.
#2 - Directive Language

#2: Use language that is directive rather than permissive.

- Use language in annual evaluations that is specific and concise about expectations:
  - “You must increase your publications in first-tier journals” instead of “You might want to look at submitting more of your work to good journals.”

- (It’s hard to be directive with your colleagues; but as chair it’s your job to do so.)

- Key the language of expectation to the language in the university, college and/or departmental criteria.

- The same is true of your P&T evaluation letter:
  - Relate the points you are making about performance to specific areas of the criteria. If you’ve done the annual evaluations right, this will be easy because you will have laid out the connections already.
#3: It’s YOUR evaluation

• You are the person who signs the letter, you are the one whose reputation is on the line. You can’t hide behind summarizing or recapping what the committee or external evaluators said.

• If you lend support to an obviously weak case, you undermine your personal and professional credibility and call all your other judgments into question.

• Your job as chair is not to simply support the candidate, or mirror the support or lack of it by a committee. You are expected to exercise independent judgment, based on your evaluation of the dossier.

• Endorse the candidate only if you believe the candidate meets the criteria established by the university, college, department, and discipline.
#4: Individuality isn’t always a good thing.

- For your annual and T&P letters, use a template.
  - Everyone’s letter should be as much the same as possible in the bones, with the muscle & fat shaped to individual strengths and weaknesses.
- Intro; a paragraph each on teaching, research, and service (or whatever is in assignment); conclusion.
- Always summarize your overall assessment at the end: “Overall, your performance is satisfactory/unsatisfactory for the year” or something similar.
#5: Letters are not 19\textsuperscript{th} century Novels

• Long letters are not automatically Good letters. Unlike Charles Dickens, you are not being paid by the word.

• Be clear and succinct: other evaluators have access to the same materials you do so you don’t need to summarize them. What they want to see is what conclusion *you* have come to after reviewing the materials.

• Don’t quote from the external evaluation letters; name no names or institutions. Use generalities or summarize—everyone else can see and read the letters for themselves.

• I have seen brilliant, insightful letters of 1.5 not-very-dense pages. Those who are reading 250 files will appreciate conciseness.
#6: Letters are not Science Fiction Fantasy movies

- Your audience is smart and knowledgeable: be honest about the facts; don’t sugar coat and don’t denigrate when the facts say otherwise.

- You do not want other evaluators to read your letter and say, “How can this chair say this person is a sterling teacher when the evaluations show he’s been below the department and college mean 4 out of 5 years?”

- You can explain the record if needed, but don’t expect us to believe it’s a train if it walks like a duck.
We Hope It Never Happens...

- No one wants to see a colleague’s appointment end or discipline imposed because of performance or behavioral issues.
- But it happens....and the chair will be involved if it does.
- Understand the processes; ostrich feathers will not look good on you.
Connecting Evaluation and Discipline

• Evaluations of faculty can encourage and reward achievement; but are also necessary in mitigating disasters.
• Evaluations are a key piece of equipment in the chair’s “toolkit.”
• It is the piece most completely in the control of departments and colleges, and the first line of defense when “bad behavior” occurs.
• If the evaluation piece is right, the rest is much easier.
• AND....
You are not expected to do this alone....

“The following information is for professional drivers on a closed course....”
Evaluation & Discipline

Mid-term Review

Annual Evaluations

Sustained Performance Evaluations

Remediation Plan

Investigations: EEO, HR, OAA, OIA, etc.

Discipline

Result: Changed Behavior

Result: Termination

The Total Picture
Mid-Term Evaluation

Tenure-Track Only

Stand-alone process not connected to discipline or termination; **not used for evaluation or discipline**;
Part of tenure probationary period
Annual & Sustained Performance Evaluations

- Annual Evaluations
- Sustained Performance Evaluations
- Remediation Plan
- Result: Changed Behavior
- Result: Termination?
Unsatisfactory Annual Evaluation

Untenured and non-Tenure-Track

Annual Evaluations

Result: Termination?
Results of Investigation & Discipline

- Annual Evaluations
- Investigations: EEO, HR, OAA, OIA, etc.

Discipline

Result: Changed Behavior
Result: Termination
Evaluation, Investigation & Discipline

The Total Picture

Mid-term Review

Annual Evaluations

Sustained Performance Evaluations

Remediation Plan

Result: Changed Behavior

Result: Termination

Investigations: EEO, HR, OAA, OIA, etc.

Discipline
Ending Faculty Employment

Type of Appointment

Non-tenured and non-tenure track:
- Reorganization; reallocation of resources; *Incompetence or misconduct*; non-renewal w/o cause; “soft money”

Tenure-track in unit:
- Reorganization; reallocation of resources; department abolished; *unsatisfactory performance*; “just cause”

Tenured:
- “Just cause”
Ending Faculty Employment

Sources For “Just Cause”

“Just Cause” = Reg 7.048

“Just Cause” = CBA 27

“Incompetence” or “Misconduct”

Termination of faculty employment, including tenured
Examples of Incompetence or Misconduct
Reg. 7.048(1)(a)-(p)

• (a) Neglect of duty or responsibilities which impairs teaching, research, or other normal and expected services to the University;
• (b) Failure to perform the terms of employment;
• (c) Willful violation of a rules or regulation of the University;
• (d) Failure to discharge assigned duties;
• (e) Conduct, professional or personal, involving moral turpitude;
• (f) Violation of the ethics of the academic profession;
• (g) Action(s) which impair, interfere with, or obstruct; or aid, abet, or incite the impairment, interference with, or obstruction of; the orderly conduct, processes, and functions of the University.
• (h) Failure to return from an approved leave;
• (i) Failure to maintain professional licensure or clinical privileges necessary to perform assigned duties;
• (j) Threatening or abusive language or conduct;
• (k) Sexual harassment;
• (l) Falsification of records;
• (m) Unauthorized use of state property, equipment or personnel;
• (n) Possession, sale, distribution of alcoholic beverages or non-prescribed drugs;
• (o) Insubordination;
• (p) Possession of unauthorized weapons and/or firearms on university property.
Potential Steps:
Ascending Order of Severity

--Letter of Counseling  Not subject to grievance

--Written reprimand
--Suspension with pay
--Suspension without pay
--Demotion to next lower rank with reduction in salary
--Termination

Discipline: Subject to grievance

Note: Steps do not have to be taken sequentially, and the process can begin at any step, depending on the severity or nature of the issue. Follow-up: Annual Evaluation
Again, We Hope It Never Happens, but....

Who Ya Gonna Call?

• Provost’s Office:
  – Angel Kwolek-Folland, Associate Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs akf@aa.ufl.edu

• Human Resources:
  – Kim Baxley, Director, Employee & Labor Relations kim-c@ufl.edu
  – Brook Mercier, Associate Director, E&LR bmercer@ufl.edu

• General Counsel’s Office:
  – Ryan Fuller, Associate University Counsel ryanf@ufl.edu

• Or the Associate Dean or HR representative in your college